

# Responses from GSAS and HGSU-UAW regarding Unionization

## Hyperlinked Questions

### Voting

- Are those who do not have a teaching requirement able to be in the union and vote?
- What defines a research associate and teaching assistant?
- Why can't first year students vote?

### Goal of Unionization

- What is the main goal of unionization? How will this benefit GSAS students?
- Specifically, how will the union benefit students in the sciences, SEAS, those in longwood, etc.?
- How would the union affect international students?
- How does the union address financial concerns of the students?
- How would a union negatively affect a student?
- What bargaining power does the union have?

### Joining and Dues

- Who is allowed to join the union? Are international students allowed to join?
- Do we have to join the union if the measure passes?
- Can departments opt out of the union?
- How much are union dues? Is it a flat rate or percentage?
- Do non-members have to pay a union fee? If so, how much?
- Will the dues increase due to inflation or other reasons? What may be a reason for increase?
- Will dues be different for students with grants (e.g. from NSF, NRSA, NIH, training grants, etc.)?
- How would dues impact the stipend we receive?
- Will the union fee be different from one department to another if the departments have different stipend levels? If so, why?
- What would the dues be used for?
- Will our dues go to fund any UAW political interests?
- What percentage of students are currently receiving 'full' RA stipends? What percentage are funded based on teaching?

### Contract

- Will there be individual contracts or rules for each program?
- Specific to HGSU-UAW: Could the HGSU-UAW provide some of the points of a contract they would anticipate being formed?
- What sacrifices, if any, in student benefits would be made in order to receive new benefits? (e.g. If we receive dental care would we have to pay more in co-pays in other areas?)
- Would graduate students be allowed to take classes beyond the requirements of their degree? Would we have to pay tuition for these extra courses?
- If a department has a high stipend, will it be lowered due to the union?
- Will the contract include annual/biannual raises?
- Will the contract force university wide standardization?
- If the union passes and the contract is being constructed, will students be applicable for a raise in their stipend before the contract is voted upon?

## **Strike**

- What form would a strike take?
- How would a research assistant strike without impacting their time to degree or relationship with their advisor?
- Are there or will there be protections for students who break strike to ensure they will not be punished or retaliated against by the union?
- Would all departments have to go on strike because of a grievance that only affects one department?
- Would a strike affect visa status?

## **UAW Specific Questions**

- Are the students coming around to collect signatures in support of the union being compensated by UAW? Related to this, what are the interests of UAW, financial or otherwise, in supporting a unionization effort by Harvard graduate students?
- Is there a way to guarantee that the fees I am paying will not go towards funding politicians or political positions which I may or may not agree with?
- Both in contract negotiations and in the union in general, how will individual departments' needs be represented? Will there be people present to speak for different departments, or for larger groupings of departments (eg humanities, natural sciences)?
- How will HGSU-UAW ensure that the union is responsive to a range of political and ideological beliefs? How can HGSU-UAW avoid turning into a political advocacy group, and remain a group that welcomes and fosters intellectual and political diversity?
- How will the union ensure transparency in its future communications?

## **Other Concerns**

- How much money has the university spent on anti-union law firms?
- Is there an effect on the student-faculty relationship after a union passes from current unionized public universities?
- Why have administrators asked faculty members to act as middle management and "Explain the Disadvantages of Union Membership"?

## **GSC Specific Questions**

- What will the relationship between the Union and GSC be like?
- Will any of the roles currently filled by the GSC as a body representing the students be passed over to the Union?
- What is the official position of the GSC on unionization?

## Voting

### Are those who do not have a teaching requirement able to be in the union and vote?

#### HGSU-UAW

HGSU-UAW is a union of student workers performing teaching or research. This includes those who work in labs.

#### GSAS

The exact definition of voting eligibility is contained in the Notice of Election that has been emailed to all students on the voting list. In general, however those eligible to vote are students enrolled in a Harvard degree program who are currently being compensated for teaching and/or research, regardless of funding sources. Whether the teaching is required or optional for the student does not matter. Doctoral students who held one of the covered positions in the 2015-16 academic year but are not presently holding a covered position will also be allowed to vote under the National Labor Relations Board “challenge” procedures, which means that their eligibility would be determined after the election.

### What defines a research associate and teaching assistant?

#### HGSU-UAW

Currently, Harvard determines the roles and requirements of a job title and can change their expectations however they want. Our union is defined as Harvard student workers performing teaching or research regardless of title. Having a union will give us the chance to sit with the administration and make these distinctions more clear.

#### GSAS

Those eligible to vote are students enrolled in a Harvard degree program who are currently being compensated for teaching and/or research as teaching fellows, teaching assistants, undergraduate course assistants, and research assistants, regardless of funding sources. Undergraduate students serving as research assistants are not included. However, the titles “research assistant,” “teaching fellow,” and “teaching assistant” are used in different ways across the different programs and schools at Harvard, which necessitates a close examination of the specific circumstances in each program.

### Why can't first year students vote?

#### HGSU-UAW

The NLRB requires that, in order to vote, you have to have worked. Those who have not yet worked cannot vote under the law. However, student workers who are working their first year should absolutely vote.

#### GSAS

Because ordinarily first year graduate students are not compensated for teaching and/or research. Most first year graduate students are usually engaged in coursework or explorations of possible research directions, although there are exceptions.

## **Goal of Unionization**

GSAS' overall answer for this section:

If students vote to unionize, the University would be legally required to deal exclusively with the HGSU-UAW to negotiate one contract for almost 4,000 students in 11 different schools and more than 50 degree programs. The size and diversity of this group is unprecedented in a bargaining unit at a private university. Unless and until an employment contract is negotiated, it's not clear that one contract will meet the needs of this diverse group and no promises can be made about whether it will provide better benefits than that the University would otherwise already provide.

### What is the main goal of unionization? How will this benefit GSAS students?

HGSU-UAW

Excellent question. Here is the answer from our FAQ: We can't guarantee any specific improvements in our contract. We can guarantee that a union will empower us to negotiate as equals with the administration for what we want. Student workers at other universities have been able to use this power to win significant, specific improvements in their working conditions and benefits. Like any contract, a union contract must be negotiated, and that means that we can't be certain that any specific policies or improvements will be included. What we do know is that a union will give us the power to make those improvements. We can also guarantee that a contract will secure those improvements against administrative tampering. At present the administration changes policies and benefits unilaterally, without any obligation to consult those affected, as it has this year by raising copays in our healthcare plan. Our contract will be a legally enforceable document that will guarantee our benefits and conditions of employment, ensuring that the administration cannot change our benefits without negotiating with us.

A union also guarantees us the right to vote on our contract. If we are unsatisfied with a contract, we can vote against it and go back to the negotiating table to work out a better agreement. Ultimately, our vote on that contract ensures that we will have a contract that we've democratically approved.

Specifically, how will the union benefit students in the sciences, SEAS, those in longwood, etc?

HGSU-UAW

Here is the answer from our FAQ:

- Winning a contract through collective bargaining means having a legally enforceable document that guarantees our conditions of employment. Those benefits cannot be changed unilaterally by the university without negotiating with our union. Here are some examples of what we stand to win by bargaining:
- Annual, across-the-board stipend increases and timely payments.
- Enhanced dental, vision, and mental health insurance (including lower co-pays for services and prescriptions)
- Improved family benefits, such as dependent health coverage, child-care subsidies and paid maternity leave
- Workload protections that enhance the quality of research and education.
- Vacation and sick leave for research assistants.
- Subsidized public transportation services.
- Protections against discriminatory practices sexual harassment and assault.
- Improved disability access and resources for people of color.
- A fair and transparent grievance procedure.

How would the union affect international students?

HGSU-UAW

Our FAQ: Anyone working in the United States has the right to join a union. Visa requirements in no way compromise your right to belong to a union that represents you in a U.S. workplace. In fact, international graduate student workers have played a central role in organizing and leading unions at more than 60 university campuses across the US, and no graduate employee union has reported any complications among their member employees who are also international students. If anything, international students face particular vulnerabilities that can be best addressed through a union, such as the protections of a grievance procedure.

How does the union address financial concerns of the students?

HGSU-UAW

From our FAQ, What have student workers unions achieved at other universities?

- In March 2015, GSOC-UAW at NYU ratified a new contract with 99% approval. Their gains include a 4% wage increase with annual minimum increases, matriculation and other fees waived for student employees, a 90% subsidy for individual health care coverage, free dental insurance, a family healthcare fund that will rise to \$200,000, and a tax-free childcare fund that will rise to \$100,000.
- In April 2015, the GEU-UAW at the University of Connecticut won their first contract with 99% voter approval. Their gains include a 9.3% compound wage increase over three years, restored access to state employee health benefits that were taken away in 2003, and nearly \$900 per year in mandatory fee waivers (almost a 5% additional wage

increase) as well as travel reimbursement, child care subsidies and six weeks of paid maternity leave.

- In May 2015, graduate workers at the University of Washington won a contract guaranteeing child care subsidy increases, tuition and fee waivers, minimum annual wage increases, and workload protections for hourly employees. Collective bargaining has won major gains over the past decade, including no cuts in health care since 2004 despite the cost of the plan increasing almost 50%.
- After an eight-day strike in 2014 (the first in 38 years), the University of Oregon Graduate Teaching Fellows won a contract with a 10% wage increase, two weeks of paid family or medical leave, and a \$150,000 “hardship fund” awarding grants for family and medical emergencies. In October they vote to ratify a new three-year contract awarding 10.7% wage increases and paid employment training.
- In 2014, the student-workers union at the University of California ratified a new contract that won a two-week increase in paid leave for childbirth (enabling a full three-month benefited maternity leave on quarter campuses, so mothers don’t have to take quarters off with no pay or benefits), a 50% increase in child care subsidies, 17% compounded wage increases over four years, new protections for workload intensity, undocumented students, and gender inclusivity, and full remission of tuition and registration fees for union members.
- Since 2007, Graduate Students United at the University of Chicago have campaigned for and won a doubling of teaching assistant salaries, better standards of care at the Student Care Center, and the right for students on parental leave to retain their student status, allowing the retention of visa status, health insurance, and access to university facilities.

#### How would a union negatively affect a student?

HGSU-UAW

- While there are many claims about what may happen to student workers, there is no evidence to those claims.
- Since a union means we have democratic decision making in our workplace, it means we have the ability to vote to prevent harm from being done to us.

#### What bargaining power does the union have?

HGSU-UAW

Power can be used in many ways, however, power comes from the workers choosing to be in the union. The more workers participating, the more power we have. At the University of Connecticut, the student workers used their power to get the best contract they could, resulting in better healthcare while saving the university money, wage increases, childcare subsidies, protected parental leave, and job security provisions. They chose to use their power several times during the process to win gains in the areas that mattered the most to them, through petitioning the board of trustees, informational flyering, holding rallies, and voting for interest arbitration.

## Joining and Dues

### Who is allowed to join the union? Are international students allowed to join?

#### HGSU-UAW

Anyone working in the United States has the right to join a union. Visa requirements in no way compromise your right to belong to a union that represents you in a U.S. workplace. In fact, international graduate student workers have played a central role in organizing and leading unions at more than 60 university campuses across the US, and no graduate employee union has reported any complications among their member employees who are also international students. If anything, international students face particular vulnerabilities that can be best addressed through a union, such as the protections of a grievance procedure.

#### GSAS

If students vote to unionize, then the union would represent all students—including international students—enrolled in a Harvard degree program and compensated for teaching and/or research, regardless of funding sources.

### Do we have to join the union if the measure passes?

#### HGSU-UAW

No one is required to join the union, though one benefit of doing so includes being able to vote for union officers and for the local's bylaws. By law, the union is obligated to enforce contracts for all workers in the bargaining unit, members and non-members alike. If our first contract includes dental insurance for all student workers, you will receive that insurance even if you chose not to join the union, and if the university suddenly took away your dental insurance, the union will still have to use its resources to fight for your benefits. Because of this, non-members typically pay an agency fee close to the dues amount paid by union members.

#### GSAS

If the union is voted in, and you hold a position that is in the bargaining unit, you will automatically be represented by the union. You cannot opt out of being in the bargaining unit.

However, that does not mean that you automatically have to become a member of the union. That will be determined based on the negotiations between the union and the University. You should be aware, however, that most UAW contracts require that employees either pay union dues or agency fees to the union as a condition of employment.

Can departments opt out of the union?

HGSU-UAW

Individuals choose to be members of the union, but under our collective bargaining laws in the United States, once workers vote democratically to form a union, all workers in that unit gain the benefits of the collective bargaining agreement (or contract).

GSAS

No. Any student considered a member of the bargaining unit would be covered by the union contract. There is no personal or department-wide opt out.

How much are union dues? Is it a flat rate or percentage?

HGSU-UAW

UAW dues are currently 1.44% of gross income from the work covered by our contract, and will only be paid by those members employed as TFs, RAs, or in other positions covered by the union. Dues payments **only start after a contract is voted on by us**, so we get to decide when we think the contract will improve our lives and work. Some union locals, like the local in which NYU's student employees are members, choose to pay a higher dues rate if they feel they need the extra resources. Any rate higher than the UAW standard must be voted on by local membership.

GSAS

The answers to many of the questions about dues will be known only if students vote to unionize and a contract is negotiated between the union and the University. The HGSU-UAW website says that UAW dues, on average, are 1.44%. (It is worth noting that according to available sources, four of the eight UAW graduate student unions assess higher dues than 1.44%) At Harvard, a teaching fellow who receives \$21,200 could pay annual union dues of \$305 at this rate. Dues will disproportionately affect students in the sciences, who conduct independent research nearly their entire time at Harvard compared with those in teaching who will cycle in and out of the union. According to the dues FAQ on the UAW website, approximately 40% of dues stays with the local, in this case, the HGSU-UAW. The remaining 60% is divided between UAW operations and the UAW's strike fund. In addition, unions are free to raise dues periodically, so one cannot be certain if the current union dues percentage will remain the same during your period with the University.

Do non-members have to pay a union fee? If so, how much?

HGSU-UAW

Typically all workers in a bargaining unit are required to pay dues or some type of agency fee. All workers will benefit from the same union contract, and the union is obligated to represent all workers and enforce the contract on their behalf, regardless of membership.

GSAS

Federal labor law allows unions to propose in collective bargaining that members of the bargaining unit either become dues-paying union members or, if they don't become union members, they pay the union a similar fee to dues. Such provisions fall under the broad heading of "union security" clauses and we cannot say what exactly would be in a contract here at Harvard.

Will the dues increase due to inflation or other reasons? What may be a reason for increase?

HGSU-UAW

Dues are a percentage, so the amount we pay varies by our income. Dues have only been increased once in the last 60 years, and it was done democratically by the membership.

GSAS

Unions are free to raise dues periodically, so it is not certain that the current union dues percentage will remain the same during your period with the University.

Will dues be different for students with grants (e.g. from NSF, NRSA, NIH, training grants, etc.)?

HGSU-UAW

No. Dues are a percentage. Any income that is covered under the contract (for teaching or research work) will be subject to dues.

GSAS

That is determined by the union.

How would dues impact the stipend we receive?

HGSU-UAW

At other universities, student workers have seen the stipend increase well above the dues amount (see above). This means that even with dues payments, we can demand (and ultimately WE decide) a pay increase due to unionization.

GSAS

If there is a union security clause in the collective bargaining agreement, you will be required to pay the required amounts in dues or fees to the union either directly or through an authorized dues deduction from your compensation/stipend.

Will the union fee be different from one department to another if the departments have different stipend levels? If so, why?

HGSU-UAW

It is a percentage, based on what an individual makes. Everyone pays the same percentage in dues.

GSAS

According to the UAW, members pay 1.44% of their salary to the union as dues (students who choose not to join the union may still have to pay a similar fee, known as an agency fee). Specific dues arrangements aren't known at this point, but it is possible that for research assistants in the sciences, dues could be assessed based on their total annual stipend, and potentially for every year they are engaged in research. Other graduate students would cycle in and out of the union depending on if they are teaching or not and dues would likely be assessed only on the amount they receive for teaching. These are questions that the union should answer for you, since dues structure and amounts are under their control.

What would the dues be used for?

HGSU-UAW

Dues cover the day-to-day cost of having a strong union. Beyond the cost of negotiating and enforcing our contract, dues also cover the costs of legal representation (which won the recent NLRB case), staffing, rent, equipment, and supplies. Because most of this work is done by our local union, half of our dues money is retained by our local. The remainder is allocated to the International Union (18%) and the Strike and Defense Fund (32%), which gives us leverage at the bargaining table. Dues also pay for:

- Technical support for contract negotiations:
- Health insurance experts who can take on the University's consultants in order to pursue the best benefits for the best price
  - Researchers who can help analyze University finances.
  - Experienced negotiators to help achieve our goals in bargaining, both at the bargaining table and developing an overall contract campaign
- Support for new organizing campaigns (for example, the organizing staff and legal support for the HGSU-UAW campaign is paid for by existing UAW members' dues money)

Political action: 3% of dues money goes toward the UAW Community Action Program (CAP), which supports progressive community and political action, including legislative and other policy advocacy on issues that matter to UAW members – for example, the UAW advocates strongly for fair, comprehensive immigration reform and expanded federal support for research funding, among other topics. (NOTE: legally, dues money cannot be used for federal campaign contributions, such as the presidential race—that money comes from members' voluntary contributions separate from, and in addition to, dues.)

Will our dues go to fund any UAW political interests?

HGSU-UAW

We are the UAW, and the members decide the political interests of the union. This is done with the CAP council (Community Action Program) who are volunteers and elected leaders from locals around the country, who decide political priorities on a local, state, and nationwide level. A non-member of the union (who pays the agency fee) can choose to have their contributions be solely for representational activities and not political ones by filing an objection, resulting in a decrease in the agency fee.

What percentage of students are currently receiving 'full' RA stipends? What percentage are funded based on teaching?

HGSU-UAW

Harvard administration keeps that information, and much like a lot of the university's finances, they keep it among themselves.

GSAS

Most PhD students in the sciences—which includes FAS departments, SEAS, and Longwood Medical Area–based students—are engaged in research during and after their second year of study, about 1,800 students. There are about 1,200 GSAS students who hold teaching fellowships over the course of a year.

**Contract**

GSAS' overall answer for this section:

These are all important questions. However, an election only provides a process for conducting negotiations, not an outcome. Only if students vote to unionize and the University and the union negotiate a contract can those questions be answered. At this stage, it is impossible to know what would be included in that contract because it hasn't been negotiated yet, and any promises of increases in stipends or improvements in benefits are purely speculative. The law requires good faith negotiations over all matters involving compensation, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

Will there be individual contracts or rules for each program?

HGSU-UAW

Our democratically elected bargaining committee will negotiate a contract based on bargaining surveys we will all have an opportunity to fill out. Once done, we will be able to vote on our contract to make sure we are happy with it. The contract can stipulate specific provisions for any group of workers within the bargaining unit.

GSAS

This cannot be answered until there is a contract, but it is worth noting the contract would cover approximately 4,000 students across 11 schools and more than 50 programs

Specific to HGSU-UAW: Could the HGSU-UAW provide some of the points of a contract they would anticipate being formed?

HGSU-UAW

It would be undemocratic for the organizing committee to decide priorities for a contract which all members get to participate in the discussion. We have, however, had thousands of conversations with people, and can give you a sense of things people have told us matter the most. [Have a look at this page.](#)

What sacrifices, if any, in student benefits would be made in order to receive new benefits? (e.g. If we receive dental care would we have to pay more in co-pays in other areas?)

HGSU-UAW

Same answer above. However, this implies that student workers receive the most compensation at Harvard the university can afford, yet we know that is not true. The university unilaterally increase benefits this year to graduate workers in specific programs and schools, which proves that they are capable of increasing benefits. Having a union will give us a democratic say in how an increase would be distributed.

Would graduate students be allowed to take classes beyond the requirements of their degree? Would we have to pay tuition for these extra courses?

HGSU-UAW

The university has control over academic issues, such as course requirements. Having a union will give us the ability to negotiate over our working conditions. However, if the university were to try to change the ways in which compensation works, such as by requiring us to pay for tuition which we have not paid for in the past, that would be a change in our compensation, which we have a right to negotiate over.

If a department has a high stipend, will it be lowered due to the union?

HGSU-UAW

This has not happened with any graduate union in the country.

Will the contract include annual/biannual raises?

HGSU-UAW

At NYU, UConn, UMass Amherst, and UMass Boston, they have negotiated regular pay increases through their contract. [Link](#)

Will the contract force university wide standardization?

HGSU-UAW

The university already has university wide standardization. Currently all graduate student workers receive the same health care plan, we have the same policies that affect us. Having a union will give us the power to negotiate the policies so they best fit our needs on a department level as well as on a campus wide level.

If the union passes and the contract is being constructed, will students be applicable for a raise in their stipend before the contract is voted upon?

HGSU-UAW

The university is expected to continue their past practices until a contract is completed under the law.

## **Strike**

What form would a strike take?

HGSU-UAW

Strikes take a variety of forms, and the members choose a) when to strike via a  $\frac{2}{3}$  support vote to strike, and then they choose individually to participate. Strikes can take many forms.

How would a research assistant strike without impacting their time to degree or relationship with their advisor?

HGSU-UAW

Strikes may include both teachings and research assistants. At the University of Washington's student worker union, for instance, RAs fortunately have not had to strike, but several times they have begun preparations for a strike to achieve a fair contract. As part of such preparations, RAs engaged in discussions to figure out how best to participate in a strike without damaging their own academic progress. If the members of our union were to democratically contemplate a strike one day, we would sort through the same set of issues as well. (Updated Answer Monday 11/14)

Are there or will there be protections for students who break strike to ensure they will not be punished or retaliated against by the union?

HGSU-UAW

While a strike is most effective when we all stand together, it is up to individual members whether to go on strike, and the UAW does not fine members who do not participate. (Updated Answer Monday 11/14)

Would all departments have to go on strike because of a grievance that only affects one department?

HGSU-UAW

As a union we work together. We can support each other when one department has a grievance that the rest of the union finds unacceptable. Again, a 2/3 majority would have to vote yes to have a strike and members choose individually to participate. Additionally, the union can advocate in other ways besides a strike when the university fails to meet the contract.

Would a strike affect visa status?

HGSU-UAW

International students have participated in strikes in the past, which is their legal right.

### **UAW Specific Questions**

Are the students coming around to collect signatures in support of the union being compensated by UAW? Related to this, what are the interests of UAW, financial or otherwise, in supporting a unionization effort by Harvard graduate students?

HGSU-UAW

The vast majority of student organizers are volunteers. Some students are paid for their time organizing like they would any other job because they spend time that could otherwise be spent on other activities. Grad students who feel strongly that unionization will improve the lives of grad workers have no conflict of interest in doing a job that aligns with their beliefs

Is there a way to guarantee that the fees I am paying will not go towards funding politicians or political positions which I may or may not agree with?

HGSU-UAW

Non-members that do not want contributions being made to candidates and policies that support labor laws can file an objection to have their fees reduced to cover only representational costs. Each year that %value is calculated for a local which determines the fee.

Both in contract negotiations and in the union in general, how will individual departments' needs be represented? Will there be people present to speak for different departments, or for larger groupings of departments (eg humanities, natural sciences)?

#### HGSU-UAW

We elect a bargaining committee that is representative of the diverse group of workers in the union. These bargaining committee members represent the entire unit in order to ensure that our contract benefits us all. After a contract is ratified, we can elect stewards in individual programs and departments that ensure the contract is followed in the different areas of the university.

How will HGSU-UAW ensure that the union is responsive to a range of political and ideological beliefs? How can HGSU-UAW avoid turning into a political advocacy group, and remain a group that welcomes and fosters intellectual and political diversity?

The union will represent all student workers regardless of their political beliefs. Our local will be able to use our collective voice to lobby on political matters that directly impact our membership, like increasing STEM funding and advocating for expanded opportunities for international students to work in the US after graduation. When it comes to taking positions on elections, just as on bargaining matters, democratic procedures would be followed – for example, the UAW endorsed Hillary Clinton for president after surveying the membership. UAW members found Hillary Clinton to be the better candidate because she embraced more of the issues of important to working families. Positions on large political issues are typically set at the national level. No person is ever compelled to take a political position contrary to their personally held views on the basis of union membership.

HGSU-UAW would become a local union within the UAW, which has a democratic structure balancing the interests of 400,000 active members in hundreds of local unions across the US, Puerto Rico and Canada. The spirit of this democratic structure is best captured in the [Ethical Practices Code \(EPC\)](#), a key component of the UAW Constitution that codifies the Union's intent to promote internal democracy while also attempting to balance the interests of ALL members of the Union. The key passage is the following. *"Each member shall be entitled to a full share in Union self-government. Each member shall have full freedom of speech and the right to participate in the democratic decisions of the Union. Subject to reasonable rules and regulations, each member shall have the right to run for office, to nominate and to vote in free, fair and honest elections. In a democratic union, as in a democratic society, every member has certain rights but s/he also must accept certain corresponding obligations. Each member shall have the right freely to criticize the policies and personalities of Union officials; however, this does not include the right to undermine the Union as an institution; to vilify other members of the Union and its elected officials or to carry on activities with complete disregard of the rights of other members and the interests of the Union; to subvert the Union in collective bargaining or to advocate or engage in dual unionism."*

### How will the union ensure transparency in its future communications?

Since the immediate project for HGSU-UAW would be negotiations for our first contract, it makes sense to describe how grad and other academic unions have typically handled negotiations in a democratic and transparent manner. We would elect a bargaining committee from among RAs and TAs, who would ask our colleagues to fill out surveys that would serve as the basis for developing an initial bargaining agenda. At UConn, for example, a majority of all grad assistants filled out surveys at this stage. Once the committee develops an initial set of bargaining goals based on those surveys, the entire union membership will vote whether to approve them. As another campaign example, a majority of all 6,000 University of California postdocs voted to approve their bargaining agenda for the 2016 negotiations. Once negotiations start, the committee would communicate written updates, hold open meetings and office hours to make sure all members have the opportunity to stay informed. Once the committee reaches a tentative agreement with Harvard, it would distribute a summary and the actual language so that RAs and TAs could review it and then vote democratically whether to accept it as the first contract. At both a majority of Conn RAs and TAs in 2015 and a majority of UC postdocs in 2016 voted to approve those contracts. Subsequent to bargaining, the union would codify democratic practices in bylaws, such as those at the University of Connecticut.

## Other Concerns

### How much money has the university spent on anti-union law firms?

GSAS

The University receives legal advice from Harvard attorneys and outside law firms on scores of issues that are important to the Harvard community. This includes labor issues, which are treated no differently than the others. Both Harvard and the union have retained law firms to represent them in connection with this election.

### Is there an effect on the student-faculty relationship after a union passes from current unionized public universities?

HGSU-UAW

No. From our FAQ: In the decades during which student workers at campuses across the country have had unions, there's been no evidence that collective bargaining has a negative impact on relationships between students and their advisors. Peer-reviewed studies have suggested positive effects for grad unions on student/faculty relationships. By giving graduate students real power and a direct channel to the administration, our union will allow our advisors to focus on research and mentoring their graduate students rather than on dealing with employment issues like health care, timely payment, and parental leave. Our union will allow us to join the faculty holding administrators accountable and prioritizing the university's core mission of research, scholarship, and teaching. No graduate employee would support contract provisions that might harm the work or research of our PIs. Our bargaining surveys set our priorities, and all union members get to ratify our bargaining agenda. Our union's democratic process ensures that our contract will protect both our interests and the research of our PIs and labs. Academic success and a thriving research enterprise are top priorities for all graduate employees, and we can make sure we negotiate a contract that reflects our priorities.

GSAS

Public universities are governed by the labor laws of each state. Private universities are governed by federal law, the National Labor Relations Act. These situations are not exactly analogous. There is very limited experience of unionization at private universities. NYU is the only private university that has a graduate student labor union. Research Assistants in the sciences are explicitly excluded from the current NYU graduate student union. In fact, there is no experience with the broad bargaining unit currently under consideration here at Harvard.

The effect of a labor union being present between students and faculty at Harvard is difficult to predict. The collaboration between students and faculty here is at the heart of Harvard's academic excellence and helps Harvard attract the most accomplished students and faculty. As a University, we aspire to encourage and support faculty-student relationships to best advance each student's education.

Why have administrators asked faculty members to act as middle management and "Explain the Disadvantages of Union Membership"?

HGSU-UAW

Harvard's administration, like other Ivy League administrations, has taken a strong position against unionization. It is very common for universities to try to enlist the support of faculty to convince RAs and TAs to oppose unionization. "Explaining the disadvantages" is a way to influence RAs and TAs to vote no without breaking the law that prohibits coercion by management in a union campaign. At NYU in 2013, where the administration encouraged faculty to refrain from any campaigning around unionization, RAs and TAs voted overwhelmingly, 98.4% to 1.6% in favor of unionization.

GSAS

The University is encouraging a full and open discussion that encourages diverse opinions to be heard so that eligible students cast informed votes. Across our community, there are a wide range of views on student unionization and the University is encouraging the expression of those views. In addition, faculty and students are asking questions about unionization, and the University is moving to answer those questions.

Among the questions asked have been those about what rules exist under law concerning what the University and the union can communicate in the course of a union election. More than a year ago, the University sent to faculty a document informed by National Labor Relations Board policy that addressed these issues, outlined allowed and prohibited contacts and conversations. There was no request to take any specific position but, rather, simply to inform.

## GSC Specific Questions

GSAS' overall answer for this section:

Through the Graduate Student Council, who reach directly to students for guidance, GSAS students have a voice in current and developing policies and practices. Senior GSAS administrators, including the GSAS Dean, meet monthly with the GSC Executive Board and regularly speak with the GSC at other times. These meetings, with an agenda set by the GSC executive board, provide an accessible and open exchange of ideas and concerns that can and does inform and create change at GSAS. For example, the Parental Accommodation and Financial Support program was launched in 2013 after students advocated for and worked with GSAS administrators to develop a new policy that provided benefits for new parents.

What will the relationship between the Union and GSC be like?

HGSU-UAW

Graduate student governments exist at other union campuses. In the case of UConn, the relationship between the union and the GSS is a positive relationship, in which both entities work collaboratively towards common goals.

Will any of the roles currently filled by the GSC as a body representing the students be passed over to the Union?

HGSU-UAW

No responsibilities change, both the union and the graduate student government can advocate for a given improvement. When in negotiations, the graduate student government could do a lot to raise visibility to a given topic which the members of the government are concerned.

What is the official position of the GSC on unionization?

The President of the GSC

The GSC is neutral on the topic of unionization.

If the union passes, I imagine the union and GSC can work collaboratively with HGSU-UAW. I think both can exist without altering the GSC's executive board layout or funding for students (conference grants, GSG and DGSO funding, etc). The GSC and HGSU-UAW would have to work together when it comes to advocacy.